

Vera Wang May Save Melrose Avenue

By Andrew Asch | Friday, March 12, 2010



Vera Wang at 8445 Melrose. The boutique's sales clerks said a store sign would be installed soon.

A once high-flying section of West Hollywood's Melrose Avenue might get another chance to become a thriving retail street now that a fashion star opened a boutique there recently.

On March 4, [Vera Wang](#) opened a self-named store at 8445 Melrose Ave. It is reportedly her first store on the West Coast and is located a block or so west of the influential [Marc Jacobs](#) boutique. However, reminders of the Great Recession loom large in this place. Wang's neighbors include more than five vacant storefronts.



The street's landlords and real estate brokers hope Wang can attract more fashion stars to this neighborhood. CB Richard Ellis broker Jay Luchs said this stretch of Melrose is a go-to place for fashion since it claims a [Diane von Furstenberg](#)

boutique. Luxury labels [Marni](#) and [Alexander McQueen](#) maintain stores around this block, too.

"Vacancy has been rough," he said of the street. "But it is a destination and a place stylists love to go." He also claims the neighborhood's real estate prices dropped 30 percent to 50 percent since their peak in Summer 2008. Then the average price for commercial real estate was \$12 per square foot.

The Vera Wang boutique offers her celebrated bridal collection as well as her label's ready-to-wear. The boutique's interior design is as unique as Wang's styles. In the middle of the store, there is a gas-powered "eternal flame" torch. Iron fixtures reminiscent of tree branches stand in the boutique's front section. In the back courtyard, a fountain burbles.

In other notes, Vera Wang is not the only designer setting up a new bridal shop in the Los Angeles area. [Priscilla of Boston](#) reportedly will be opening a bridal shop in Beverly Hills later this year, according to a real estate broker familiar with the deal. However, he was not authorized by his company to speak to the press. On Feb. 5, the [Alfred Angelo](#) bridal and special-occasions label moved to a larger shop located at 358 S. La Cienega Blvd., which is close to the Beverly Center, a Los Angeles luxury mall. The new shop offers the label's recently debuted lines, Alfred Angelo Private and Niki White.



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